

*DeKalb Walks*



***Commissioner Larry Johnson's  
DeKalb Walks...  
For The Health of It  
Initiative***

***How To Start  
Your Walking Club***

*DeKalb Walks*



## ***DeKalb Walks Goals***

- Collectively lose 700,000 pounds county-wide; or approximately one pound per DeKalb resident
- Individually, reduce the resting heart rate by two points and work to lose 2-5 as a personal goal
- To promote healthy lifestyles and promote the health benefits of walking by engaging in a sustained fitness walking program that will result in a fitter and healthier DeKalb
- Create and maintain neighborhood walking groups to promote a healthy walking regime and as a by-product a stronger sense of community
- Walk to reduce the high incidence of preventable diseases a walking program can help to eliminate such as diabetes and high blood pressure





## WALKING 101

### Start

To begin a walking program, first contact your medical provider for a check-up or consultation if you:

- Have been sedentary for a year or more
- Don't currently exercise and are over age 65
- Have been diagnosed with heart trouble
- Are pregnant
- Have high blood pressure
- Have diabetes
- Have chest pain, especially on exertion
- Feel faint or have severe dizzy spells
- Have other medical conditions

### Clothing

- Depending on the climate, dress in layers so you may remove a layer as you warm up while walking and put back on if you feel cool
- Socks should be comfortable and the modern running socks made from high-tech fibers are preferable to cotton as they prevent blisters by keeping the feet drier
- A hat is essential to preventing sun exposure or keeping you from losing heat
- Sunglasses for outdoor walking prevent UV exposure for your eyes
- Wear sunscreen
- Carry keys and other articles in pockets or a hip pack. Pack lightly for most walks and leave the heavy purse at home
- Carry water if you plan to be walking for a half hour or more with no water on your route. A hip pack with built-in water bottle holder is convenient

### Shoes

- Shoes must fit well, but leave enough room so your feet can expand while walking. Your walking shoes should be a size to a size and a half larger than your dress shoe
- Good walking shoes are flexible, as your foot rolls through each step. See if your shoe bends in the ball of the foot and if you can twist it from side to side. If it is stiff as a board, you need different shoes
- Walking shoes should be flat, with little difference in height between the heel and the ball of the foot
- A well-fit pair of running shoes is the best answer for most walkers. Many specialty walking shoes are too stiff and do not incorporate performance characteristics of today's running shoes to prevent overpronation.
- Replace your shoes every 500 miles



## BEGINNING YOUR WALKING CLUB

### Why Walk? Walk For the Health of It Walking....

- Improves flexibility and coordination
- Helps to control body weight and reduce body fat
- Improves mood and relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Reduces high cholesterol and lowers blood pressure
- Strengthens bones
- Reduces the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, stroke, Type 2 Diabetes
- Overall, regular participation in physical activities, like walking, is associated with increased life expectancy

### It's Social

- Neighbors interact with each other and as a side benefit, it helps to prevent crime in the community. How? You learn your neighbors and criminals do not want to be in an area where everyone knows everyone and there is a lot of community activity taking place
- Walking is one of the best, most convenient forms of physical activity. It can be enjoyed by those young and old, fast or slow, beginner or experienced

### Step 1: Organizing Your Walking Club

Before starting a walking club, it is important to identify 3 to 5 people to help you start your club. These individuals will help you promote the walking club and encourage community participation. These individuals might already exist in the form of an informal group of people already walking in the community.

As an alternative, consider asking people who are already walking for fitness to be "charter members." Suggest that each charter member ask 2 or 3 other people to join. Remember to invite everyone in the community --- it is a fitness as well as a community building experience.

### Step 2: Planning the Details of Your Walking Club

When Planning a walking club, be sure to consider the following:

#### When and How Often Will the club Meet?

- Set a specific, standard time when most people are able to attend
- Piggyback on any existing events that can complement the walk
- Ideally, participants should walk 2 to 3 days a week (e.g., Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday). **Daily, would be even better!**



## BEGINNING YOUR WALKING CLUB (cont'd)

### A Guide to Establishing a Walking Club

#### Select a Walking Route

- Consider establishing your first walking club route around a safe park nearby or along well-kept sidewalks around your community. If desired, purchase inexpensive pedometers to track your steps
- Choose a route that always starts and finishes in the same place --- ideally the end of a street, a specific cul-de-sac in the community or the entrance to the subdivision. This will allow people of different fitness levels to walk various distances and find their way back.
- Utilize online mapping websites to identify and/or measure the distance of a route chosen by you and/or the walking club
- If safety is a concern, consult local law enforcement for guidance on safe routes and to make them aware of your walking club activities (if the route taken is a major thoroughfare and sidewalks are not present)

#### Step 3: Promoting Your Walking Club

Once the logistics are determined, begin recruitment efforts. Select a kick-off date and start promoting the walking club to your community through your newsletter, phone tree, flyers, etc.

#### If Flyers are Used, Include the Following Information

- Date, time and location of the walking club kick-off event
- Make sure flyers indicate that people will be WALKING on the kick-off date
- List a contact person and their phone number and email address
- Mention the benefits of walking
- Tell people to bring a friend!

#### Step 4: Staging a Kick-Off Event

At the kick-off event, provide a brief introduction about the particulars of the walking club and the challenge of Commissioner Johnson's DeKalb Walks...Walk for the Health of It Initiative which is to collectively lose 700,000 pounds countywide, lower an individual's resting heart rate by two points and individually lose 2-5 pounds over the course of the year.



## BEGINNING YOUR WALKING CLUB (cont'd)

- Circulate a sign-in sheet to get contact information for all interested participants (name, phone number, email).
- Discuss and agree on the logistical arrangements of the group (i.e. when/where the walk will occur and how long each walk will last).
- Encourage all interested participants to walk as often as possible, with the understanding that if they miss a walk, they can rejoin the group at any time
- Briefly mention that because everybody begins at different fitness levels, people should walk at their own pace. Also, walkers should consult with their doctors if they have any chronic diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, etc., *Before beginning a walking program.*

### Safety First!

- If you're going for a longer walk, **warm-up** with stretching exercises and include a **cool-down** period to reduce stress on your heart and muscles
- **Practice correct posture** --- head upright, arms bent at the elbow, and swinging as you stride
- Choose comfortable, **supportive shoes**, such as running, walking, or cross training shoes, or light hiking boots
- **Protect your skin** by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, longer clothing, UV-protective sunglasses and sunscreen
- **Drink Plenty of Water** before, during and after walking to cool working muscles and keep your body hydrated. Begin slowly and gradually increase the length of time and the intensity of your walk
- **Use Sidewalks** where provided and cross or enter streets where it is legal to do so. When a sidewalk is not provided, it is usually safest to **walk facing road traffic**
- Make it easy for drivers to see you. Dress in **light colors** and **wear reflective material**. Carry a flashlight at dusk or when it is dark.

*Now It is Time to Hit the Pavement and Begin Your Walking Club's First Walk!*



## BEGINNING YOUR WALKING CLUB (cont'd)

### Step 5: Keeping Your Walking Club Going and Growing Maintaining and Expanding Your Walking Club's Membership

Walking clubs are very dynamic --- a group can start with 40 walkers and dwindle at any given time to 10 consistent walkers. Fluctuations occur, but is the group's responsibility to continuously and creatively promote the walking club. Also, keep in mind that walking clubs may not be feasible or successful in all communities. In communities where this is the case, the activity of walking can still be promoted.

#### Maintaining Motivation

- Highlighting the walking club in your community newsletter, including testimonials from walkers along with a calendar of the club's scheduled walking activities helps
- Scheduling quarterly social functions helps promote the club as well as community fellowship
- Rotating the leadership of the walking club
- Recognizing members when they reach special milestones -- 10 miles, 50 miles, 100 miles, etc., or recognizing the length of time walked. Members can keep track of their miles or hours walked by using a walking journal or log (samples included)
- Organizing challenges such as increased distances or time spent walking

### Step 6: Evaluating the Success of Your Walking Club

- Keep Records of attendance at each walking club event. This will help determine if there has been an overall increase or decrease in walkers
- Consider having the club members fill out periodic satisfaction surveys. These surveys can give the members a chance to report positive feedback about the walking club, as well as feedback on what can be done to improve the club
- *And last, but certainly not least, provide the milestone information achieved by the club to the Office of Commissioner Larry Johnson on a quarterly basis. Milestones such as the person who lost the most weight, walked the most miles, lowered their heart rate significantly, etc. as these individuals will be recognized at the annual DeKalb Walks Event that will be held in September 2008.*

# *DeStalk Walks*

Month:					Route, Notes & Goals
Date	Paces*	Miles	Calories*	Time	
					<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Beginning of Week</b>                      <b>End of Week</b></p> <p>Weight: _____                      Weight: _____</p> <p>Resting Heart Rate: _____                      Resting Heart Rate: _____</p> </div>
Week No. _____					
This Week's Total					
Last Week's Total					
Year-To-Date Total					

\*If you have a pedometer that calculates paces and calories



# *DeKalb Walks*

## NEIGHBORHOOD WALKING CLUB SIGN-UP

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

- Male  Female Age:  12 & Under  13-18 years old  19-35 years old  
 36-55 years old  55 and older  Family walks together

Name of Community/Walking Club \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Best Time To Walk  A.M.  7:00  8:00  9:00  10:00  11:00

P.M.  Noon  1:00  2:00  3:00  4:00  5:00  6:00

Other \_\_\_\_\_

How Long Would You Like to Walk?  30 minutes  60 minutes  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Best Day(s) To Walk:  Sunday  Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday  
 Friday  Saturday (choose at least two days)

I Would Prefer to Walk and Meet at: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_